

## ABSTRACT

The current study investigated two major excessive behaviors associated with electronic devices, *excessive gaming* and *excessive instant messaging*, with which an estimated one-fourth of Hong Kong young adults and adolescents found addicted based on past reports. Scales assessing the two excessive behaviors with electronic devices, psychological distress, externalizing symptoms and personality variables were administered to 283 undergraduates in the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Based upon hierarchical regression analyses, psychological distress accounted for over 10% variance in the predictions of the two excessive behaviors. Externalizing symptoms, a construct that is frequently associated with various addictive disorders, was found to mediate the relationship between psychological distress and the two excessive behaviors, shedding new light on the mechanism underlying *excessive gaming* and *excessive instant messaging*. Additionally, the indigenous personality constructs of *Defensiveness (Ah-Q Mentality)* and *Face* were found to moderate the relationship of distress on *excessive gaming* but not on *excessive instant messaging*. These findings bring insights on the behavioral patterns with electronic devices in local young adults.

*Keywords:* Psychological distress, gaming, instant messaging, externalizing symptoms, personality